

**SILC MINUTES**  
**Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Call to Order:** Rod called the meeting to order at 1:20 pm

**Roll Call: Members Present:** Joan Ehrhardt, Sandra Koffler, Larry Thiele, Trevor Vannett, Rod Gillund, Nate Aalgaard, Scott Burlingame, Peter Yung, Melvin Erdmann, Diane Siekaniec, and Jen Schill. **Members Absent:** Jamie Hall, Emma Kotzer and Dennis Lyon

**Others Present:** Patty Wanner, DSU; Russ Cusack, DSU; Helen Baumgartner, DSU; Royce Schultze, CIL Director and Randy Sorenson, CIL Director

**Approval of Minutes:** Trevor made a motion to approve the minutes as sent, seconded by Royce. Motion carried.

**Correspondence:** None

**Committee Breakout Meetings:** Committees met for 20 minutes.

**Speaker:** Eileen Gray, Sign Language Interpreting Program Coordinator from Lake Region State College spoke to the SILC on the need for qualified sign language interpreters in the state. Eileen stated that the ND Association of the Deaf is holding empowerment workshops around the state focusing on deaf people advocating for people who are deaf. There is a law in ND stating it is a misdemeanor for nonqualified interpreters to interpret. Eileen would like to partner with IL to educate the public regarding people with hearing loss and deafness. She gave several examples of the misunderstandings about sign language and lip reading. There is a struggle in the state to provide interpreter services to people who need the service. The video relay process was explained. Eileen requested assistance from the SILC with handing out brochures and informing the public of the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing of the state. Randy mentioned Options is in need of a board member and it would be good to have a person from the deaf community on the board to assist in keeping informed of the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing. Students who graduate from the Interpreter Program have two years to become certified in ND. Eileen left brochures and cards with tips on how to communicate with people with a hearing loss and tips for people with a hearing loss to communicate with hearing people. Eileen's contact information is:  
Eileen M. Gray, Sign Language Interpreting Program Coordinator  
1801 College Dr. N - Devils Lake, ND 58301  
[www.lrsc.edu](http://www.lrsc.edu) - Email: [Eileen.gray@lrsc.edu](mailto:Eileen.gray@lrsc.edu)  
701-662-1649 - Cell: 218-969-3881 - Fax: 701-662-1570

Nate requested the following items be included on the agenda: A proposal for the distribution of new state funding if it is passed by the Legislature; honorariums; schedule of SILC meetings and the distribution of SSA Reimbursement funds should additional general funds become available during this legislative session.

**Committee Reports: External Affairs:** Scott updated the SILC on the Legislative bills. In August, 2012, the CIL Directors met with the Governor's Office. They asked for \$1.98 million in additional funds. The Governor approved \$800,000 for IL. On MLK Day there was testimony on this bill. Scott requested assistance with getting letters of support to the Appropriations Committee. He handed out an action alert to contact members of the committee. He showed maps of served, underserved and unserved areas of the state. SB 2285 requests funding for a CIL on the Turtle Mt. Reservation. It would open a satellite office. Scott testified that Independence serves this area, but is in need of additional funding to cover the area. Our SPIL provides for service coverage in this area. SB2375, sponsored by Tyler Axtness, promotes for an expansion of HCBS. Testimony on the bill was held on

2/5. The Committee recommended a study of the bill by the next session. Currently, there is a limit of 10 hours per day of service which limits many people. It is difficult to get funding for ramps and home modifications – there is a proposed change for this. Cognitive rehab for people with TBI is also included in the bill. The bill involves a tweaking of the current services that are in place. There are no other specifics regarding the bill other than the study.

**CIL Visit:** SILC members met at Independence, Inc. for a tour and to visit with the staff. A presentation was given to the SILC on the Best Practices put in place to make the IL Skills Classes as successful as they are. Some classes consist of Lefsa Making, Boredom Busters, Red Cross Safety, and Winterizing a car. There are different phases of preparation for each class including the Planning, Outreach and Class Prep phases. Interest assessments are completed to determine the classes people are interested in having.

#### **Friday, Feb 8<sup>th</sup>:**

**Call to Order:** Rod called the meeting to order at 9:10 pm

**Roll Call: Members Present:** Joan Ehrhardt, Sandra Koffler, Trevor Vannett, Rod Gillund, Jamie Hall, Nate Aalgaard, Scott Burlingame, Peter Yung, Melvin Erdmann, Diane Siekaniec, and Jen Schill. **Members Absent:** Emma Kotzer, Larry Thiele, and Dennis Lyon

**Others Present:** Patty Wanner, DSU; Russ Cusack, DSU; Helen Baumgartner, DSU; Royce Schultze, CIL Director and Randy Sorenson, CIL Director

**CIL Director Reports: Randy:** Options staff assisted 300 people with Medicare Part D prescription drugs. Six people were assisted with relocations that were not part of MFP; 10 people who were MFP; and 19 people who were close to being institutionalized called diversions – they were kept out of an institution – the family or doctor was pursuing placement in a nursing home. In Devils Lake there are 13 people who have various ramp and home modification needs, which helps with rural economic development. In Oct a deer hunt was held. There were twenty people ranging in age from 12 - 24 years old with various disabilities, 59 volunteers and over 1200 hours of volunteer time. Transportation Progress – the infrastructure is being put together – the software is in place - now working on the mechanics of the system.

**Royce:** The referrals for MFP had been slow, but are picking up now. The Dickinson office is short staffed – can't fill the part time position. DCIL can't afford to pay the staff the competitive wages in the area. Staff has spent a lot of time at the capitol. HB2029 is a housing incentive fund. ND Housing Finance is running a \$ for \$ tax credit. A donation of \$500 can be given to this fund, which would come off the tax liability when filing a tax return. Have been putting this donation information in the newsletters and publicizing it as much as possible. Some consumers testified on HB1012. The Legislative working group started meeting weekly. There are six regular members that meet. DCIL will have a booth at the ND Housing Conference on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Have received calls for income tax filing for consumers or anyone with a disability.

**Scott:** Independence's focus this year will be on how can we do what we do better. Working on getting people engaged. The staff educate consumers on legislative bills and get their input on what they need. Had consumers write letters to legislators. Independence is also working on improving the output of information to the public. Information is put on Facebook or the Website three times a week. Rep Nelson informed Scott that Turtle Mt has an accessible ski lodge by Bottineau. There are two open positions – a Direct Service Coordinator and a Community Relations Specialist.

**Nate:** Freedom has been involved with legislative issues. Work is being done on the Peer Mentoring Program. There have been 35 matches this year, which is more than in the past. Staff is working on

goals and outcomes to measure what they do – are consumers learning anything and becoming more independent. There is an intern helping while Tyler is working at the legislature. Freedom in Action groups – Had a Turkey lunch which was a huge success. Thirty one people in Fargo attended. Lefsa Making in December – had a blast. Also made homemade Christmas cards and sent them out. Had Operation Gratitude for the military personnel to thank them for what they do for our country. The Press was present – had lots of things to send to the military. In January we visited the YMCA for a tour. Had a music education package where people learned about the different types of music and the symphony orchestra. People in attendance were provided tickets to two performances. Homeless situation – There are 375 people a night in the shelters and an additional 75 in the overflow shelter system. In Jamestown, people made blankets; one was donated to the Salvation Army, the rest took them home. Giving Hearts Day will be next Thursday – all donations over \$10 are matched that day.

**Committee Reports: Internal Affairs:** Randy made a motion to have public hearings on the SPIL in Wahpeton and Devils Lake, seconded by Peter. Motion carried. SPIL assignments were handed out. March 15 will be the deadline for committees to get their SPIL parts to Helen. SILC budget – Randy commented that the SILC budget is no longer adequate. If there is an increase in SILC budget and honorariums, funds would need to be taken from the CILs budget or some allocated from an increase from the legislature. The Internal Affairs Committee will work on putting together a SILC budget to present to the SILC at the next meeting.

**Governance:** We are currently two members short of a full council. We need a representative from region 84 and 82. The Governor's office has been very timely in getting the applications approved.

**SRC Meeting:** Was held via Polycom on Jan 4<sup>th</sup>. Deb McDermott shared info on OARs and the VR budget. OOS - 485 people will be taken off the list in 2013, about 110 people in December. People with most significant disabilities come off the wait list first. The wait list has people who have a lack of readiness to work, but want their case to stay open. The VR Annual report is out. The annual VR Conference will be held Oct 9-11 in Bismarck. The SRC will meet the day before the conference. The joint meeting with SRC/SILC has been scheduled for July 25 and 26: We will meet a half day with the SRC and a half day with the SILC. The meeting will be held in Bismarck.

Peter updated the Council on the results of the needs assessment. The needs were the same as they have been in the past. A workgroup met to expand and refine our current SPIL goals. At each SILC meeting, each committee will give an update on the grid and what has been accomplished between meetings.

**Consumer Satisfaction surveys:**

**Royce:** There were 113 responses – 103 are more independent or maintained their independence as a result of services. Most responses were favorable. The three most important issues were accessibility, housing and affordable transportation. Survey was conducted by phone.

**Randy:** Satisfaction surveys are a requirement of the Federal regulations. Options has used the same survey since 1994. There were 511 people served and 297 people responded to 7 questions. Highest positive responses came from good staff treatment and the customer was in control of their services. Responses regarding staff is put into personnel files. Overall, surveys were positive. The surveys were conducted by phone.

**Scott:** Surveys are done over the phone and sent out at closure. Have a high youth population, so low return on surveys. SHIC is the largest service delivery to consumers who replied to the question

“What service did you come to us for?” “Do you feel more, the same or less independent” – most say about the same. Scott is challenging staff to do better with this. One person says they were doing worse because she hasn’t gotten out of a nursing home. “Where is income coming from?” – 16% are employed, most income is from SSI and SSDI. “What is the biggest barrier facing pwd?” – lack of understanding, problems finding employment and lack of transportation, next was housing. “What could we do to better serve pwd in this area?” - Do provide good services, get your name out, do more publicity. “What can you do to help us?” - Tell friends about services, this is the cheapest and best publicity - write letters. There were 363 consumers and 57 were contacted. Called all people and got through to only a few.

**Nate:** Freedom was one of 43 centers involved in a pilot project by NCIL to measure outcomes of CILs and the value of various programs. There were 102 people, received responses from 45%. In some cases, phones were disconnected or numbers no longer in service. One fourth of the people were not reachable, 12% not interested, 15% left message but they didn’t call back. Negative attitudes and discrimination were the highest concern.

**Proposal of Distribution of state funding:** A proposal was handed out by Nate.

Russ explained the Social Security Reimbursement process and the number of claims and results of the claims submitted. Less people are coming into the system on SS, so there are less claims, people are parking their earnings at SGA so as not to lose their claims. It is difficult to have a budget dependent on the income of SS. These funds are currently being used to fund IL and OB. Royce had a proposed budget which will be forwarded to the Internal Affairs committee. A motion by Trevor that the budget include the replacement of the SSR and include an increase to the SILC budget. No second to the motion. Nate made a motion to adopt the proposal on the table, seconded by Trevor. Discussion was held. Randy reminded the SILC that one of the roles of the SILC is to determine how funds are distributed. This is a governing role. It is one of the most important decisions to the CILs. Nate’s motion did not pass. Trevor made a motion to table the discussion on the budget, including the SSR and proposal for 2 weeks to give people a chance to think about it and have a conference call. No second to the motion. Motion failed for a lack of a second. Scott recommended a roll call vote. Motion made by Trevor to table the budget for 2 weeks. No second. Motion failed for lack of second. Royce’s proposal was another option. The proposal from Nate only includes bringing all the centers up to the same funding level, not taking any population or geography issues into consideration. The Internal Affairs committee has a tentative meeting on Feb 21 to discuss the budget. Scott called for a roll call vote on the motion to adopt the proposal presented by Nate. Motion passed with 2 abstaining, 0 no and 7 yes votes.

**Schedule of Meetings:** Nate stated that from the Orientation meeting it was suggested that we have a full meeting one day, giving people who live far away time to travel the day before, stay that night if they need to or go home. Motion made by Diane to travel on Wednesday, meet all day Thursday, and Fri morning if needed, seconded by Scott. Scott made a motion to table the discussion until the funding is resolved, seconded by Daine. Motion passed.

**Honorariums:** will be discussed when we have more information on the budget.

Randy requested that If no funds are allotted by the Legislature and SSR is taken out, could the DSU proportionately remove the SSR funds to the centers so all the centers have the same amount taken from them.

**Next Meeting:** May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in Fargo.

Meeting adjourned at 12:43.